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UNCLAS PRETORIA 001111

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/S/TCRAIG AND KGATHER
STATE FOR EB/TRA/OTP/DHAYWOOD AND OES/CDIAMOND

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SUBJECT: OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION AND
OUTREACH ON MARITIME SECURITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

REFTEL: STATE 38874

1. Per reftel, Post welcomes the opportunity to help improve the global maritime security framework. The Port of Durban is the largest of South Africa's seven ports and the busiest in Africa. Its container terminal is the largest in the southern hemisphere. In addition, it is uniquely situated to link North America with the Middle East, India, Asia, Africa, and Australia. Recognizing its significance, the United States established a Container Security Initiative (CSI) at the port in 2003. Post is also working with the U.S. Coast Guard International Port Security Liaison Officer (IPSLLO) to plan a visit to South Africa in April 2005 which would lay the groundwork for a July 2005 evaluation of security practices at the Port of Durban.

2. Maritime security issues in the Mission are managed by an Economic Officer as well as regional Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers based in South Africa. The Economic and CBP/ICE offices have a good working relationship and interact on an ad hoc basis as well as through monthly Law Enforcement Working Group (LEWG) meetings. Although the LEWG forum typically devotes its time to addressing law-enforcement matters, it also discusses inter-governmental collaboration on maritime security concerns such as the Container Security Initiative.

3. South Africa's 2006 and 2007 Mission Performance Plans (MPP) address maritime security through the "Prevention and Response to Terrorism" section. Its goal is to work with South Africa in the war on terror by deepening the relationships between USG agencies and their South African counterparts, including those involved in maritime security. The LEWG is instrumental in the implementation of all aspects of this MPP objective.

4. South Africa has repeatedly expressed interest in collaborating with the United States on maritime issues. In 2003, the South African government contacted the Embassy to express formal interest in entering into Search and Rescue and Maritime agreements. Earlier this year, the Ports of Cape Town and Durban entered into International Sister Seaport agreements with the Port of Miami-Dade to cooperate in areas of trade, tourism, and development. In addition, U.S. Customs Commissioner Robert Bonner and South Africa Customs Commissioner Pravin Gordhan successfully lobbied the World Customs Organization to adopt supply chain security measures. They ultimately hope to persuade the World Trade Organization to endorse these supply chain standards as well. Post believes that fertile ground exists in South Africa for expanded cooperation on maritime security.

FRAZER